

that the obviousness rejections pursuant to 35 USC §103(a) fail to disclose the points of novelty raised by Applicant's independent claims 1, 8 and 11. As amended in the preliminary amendment of July 14, 2000, claim 1 is now directed to a portable computing device having a central plane or surface containing a leather grain bordered by a pair of raised lateral side edges. Claim 8 is directed to a portable computing device having a leather grain layer disposed directly and integrally on the outwardly facing surface of the top shell portion, and claim 11 is now directed to a portable computing device having a top shell portion comprising a pair of raised lateral side edges bordering a leather grain layer on opposite sides of the top shell portion.

In the Office Action of July 13, 2000, claims 1-16 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Seto et al., '630 in view of Andre et al. '282. In addition, the Examiner rejected claim 17 pursuant to §103(a) as being unpatentable over Seto et al. '630 in view of Andre et al. '282, and further in view of Ma '928. The Examiner has concluded that Seto et al. disclose a portable computing device having top and bottom portions connected by a hinge and a set of keys disposed on an inwardly facing surface of the bottom portion, as well as a display screen disposed on an inwardly facing surface of the top portion. The Examiner has combined these teachings with Andre et al., who teach a leather grain disposed on an exterior facing surface of an enclosure panel housing. With respect to claim 17, the Examiner has added the disclosure in Ma for a speaker.

As stated at col. 7, lines 26-36 of Andre et al., the top of the enclosure panel is covered, and the bottom of the enclosure panel is coupled to an attachment plate where the attachment plate is further coupled to a bezel by bezel fingers. The coupling of the attachment plate to the bezel is removable so as to make the enclosure panel housings interchangeable or reconfigurable. *Id.*, col. 6, lines 25-27.

While the Examiner has correctly pointed at col. 9, lines 30-34, that the Andre et al. enclosure panel may be covered with a material, like leather, there is no suggestion in this reference for a leather grained layer located between a pair of raised lateral side edges, which protects the lateral edges of the leather grain layer from being damaged or delaminated due to heavy use or contact with hard surfaces. Andre et al. teach a leather layer which covers (1) the entire surface of his enclosure panel housing alone, or (2) covers this entire surface in conjunction with a spline 6, located in the back of the enclosure panel housing near the hinge. Since the leather covered enclosure panel housing of Andre et al. is located on top of a coupling plate which is further attached to the bezel of the top housing component, the side corners of the leather grain layer of Andre et al. are completely exposed, and can be easily damaged by delamination or contact with hard surfaces, such as wood or metal.

Applicant's portable computing device having a leather grain layer, as claimed in independent claims 1 and 11, includes a pair of raised lateral side edges (see raised lateral edges 12 and 14 of FIG. 1 and 112 and 114 of FIG. 3, for example) which assist in protecting the lateral sides of the delicate leather grain layer from being damaged or

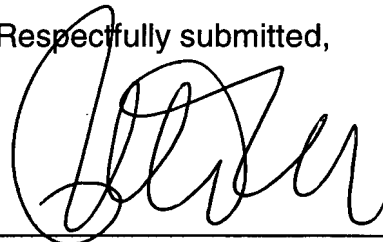
delaminated during use. There is clearly no similar disclosure in Andre et al., or Seto et al., for providing this function.

Moreover, Applicant's independent claim 8 requires that the leather grain layer be disposed directly and integrally on the outwardly facing surface of the top shell. Since Andre et al. rely upon a complicated indirect attachment of the leather layer to an enclosure panel housing, which is coupled to an attachment plate, prior to attaching it further to a bezel along the top housing component, it fails to disclose a leather grain layer being disposed directly and integrally (such as, for example, velcro, adhesive, heat seal, etc.) with the outwardly facing surface of the shell, as required in claim 8.

In view of the above, reconsideration of the obviousness rejections is respectfully requested.

Date: 10-31-00

Respectfully submitted,



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